

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-20 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 1, 7 and 17 are currently amended, Claims 16 and 19-20 are canceled without prejudice, new Claims 21-26 have been added, and Claims 2-6, 8-15 and 18 remain unchanged. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that Claims 7 and 16-17 include allowable subject matter.

The Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In particular, the Examiner contends the buffer part tapering conically at a portion to be disposed outside the inflow opening feature of Claim 7 is not shown in the drawings. This feature is shown in Figs. 2 and 3. Fig. 3 illustrates a more detailed view of the body (1) with the buffer part (3) tapering conically as it extends from the sealing ring (2) toward the outer periphery (6). In Fig. 2, the body (1) is shown in relation to the other portions of the device with the conically tapered portion of the buffer part (3) disposed outside the inflow opening (17). Therefore, every feature of the invention specified in the claims, including Claim 7, is shown in the drawings and Applications respectfully request the drawing objection be withdrawn.

Claim 1 has been amended to include all the limitations of allowable Claim 16 and rewrite Claim 16 in independent form. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 1 is allowable. Dependent Claims 2-6, 8-15 and 17-18 depend from independent Claim 1 and are allowable for the same and other reasons.

Allowable original Claim 7 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 7 is allowable.

New independent Claim 21 recites a vacuum cleaner comprising: a housing enclosing a suction chamber and a motor compartment; a dividing wall separating the suction chamber from the motor compartment and including an air-directing funnel; an electric motor disposed within the motor compartment; a centrifugal blower wheel rotationally driven by the motor; a blower housing having a inflow opening and an inner side and being configured to form a directed air stream, said blower housing surrounding

said centrifugal blower wheel, said centrifugal blower wheel and said inner side of said blower housing defining an air gap therebetween; and a seal body having an inner sealing ring surrounding the inflow opening and a buffer part extending radially outwardly from the sealing ring to an outer periphery, the seal body forming a seal between the blower housing and the dividing wall and the seal body being disposed in the inflow opening and substantially filling said air gap between the centrifugal blower wheel and the inner side of said blower housing.

The prior art, particularly Gensler and Finkenbinder, do not disclose a vacuum cleaner as recited in Claim 21. More specifically, the prior art does not disclose, among other things, a seal body having an inner sealing ring surrounding the inflow opening and a buffer part extending radially outwardly from the sealing ring to an outer periphery, the seal body forming a seal between the blower housing and the dividing wall and the seal body being disposed in the inflow opening and substantially filling said air gap between the centrifugal blower wheel and the inner side of said blower housing.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request allowance of independent Claim 21. Claims 22-26 depend from Claim 21 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claim 1-15, 17-18 and 21-26 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,



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